

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO REGULATIONS FOR YELLOW PERCH COMMERCIAL FISHERY

The Commercial Yellow Perch Workgroup, consisting of members from both the Sport and Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commissions asked the department to consider three modifications to the current commercial regulations. They are as follows:

- 1) The expansion of the commercial fishery to include the Choptank and Nanticoke Rivers.
Currently, these rivers are closed to commercial harvest. The department would set small quotas (e.g. 2,500 lbs) for each river to allow for the harvest of yellow perch as by-catch in other commercial fisheries (i.e. gill and fyke nets). Daily catch limits could also be set in an effort to keep a directed fishery from developing. A permit and tags would be distributed by the department to the fisherman after a declaration has been made to fish in either the Choptank or Nanticoke Rivers.
- 2) Remove the provision in the current regulations that requires a department staff person to be present during the sale of yellow perch in the live market.
Current regulations require the licensee to contact the department at least 24 hours prior to loading yellow perch into a container in which they will be transported and wait until the department representative is present before loading. Under this rule change, the department would still require the fisherman to notify the department 24 hours prior to the live market transaction. However, the sale of the live market yellow perch could take place without a department representative witnessing the transaction. The 24 hour notification allows a department representative to be present if he/she can be there, but it would not be required.
- 3) Open the month of December for commercial harvest.
Yellow perch begin to show up in the rivers in the month of December and while not caught in large numbers, some yellow perch harvest in the month of December could add a little income for those fishermen still fishing that time of year. Any fish caught in December would be accounted for against the following year's quota.